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Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A flexible milk hose having a longitudinal axis and being made from a uniform material for connecting a teat cup to a multiway valve in an automatic milking plant, comprising:

a first end portion for connection to a connecting neck of the teat cup;

a second end portion for connection to a connecting neck of the multiway valve, and;

a centre piece disposed between and connecting said first and second end portions and having a substantially constant interior diameter, said centre piece including spaced-apart reinforcement elements which at least partially enclose a circumference of a predetermined area of the centre piece, the respective reinforcement elements disposed in a middle of the centre piece having smaller axial dimensions than the reinforcement elements located at the respective first and second end portions to provide the centre piece with being ~~configured to have a~~ greater flexibility than said first and second end portions, said flexibility increasing towards ~~a~~ the middle of the centre piece.

2-5. Cancelled

6. (Previously Presented) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcement elements comprise spaced-apart elevations of material enclosing the circumference of the centre piece at least partially.

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7. (Currently Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 6, wherein a wall thickness of each of said spaced-apart elevations of material exceeds a wall thickness of an area located between two adjacent spaced-apart elevations of material, the wall thicknesses being defined transversely relative to ~~a~~ the longitudinal dimension/axis of the milk hose.

8. Cancelled

9. (Previously Presented) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein the first and second end portions each have formed thereon a reinforcement member, the reinforcement members being disposed on respective opposite sides of the centre piece, the reinforcement members each comprising an enlarged portion of material having a wall thickness which exceeds the wall thickness of the respective residual area of the corresponding end portion, the wall thicknesses of the reinforcement members and the residual areas being defined transversely relative to a longitudinal dimension of the milk hose.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein the hose comprises a permanently chemically passive and stable material which will not give off secretions to the milk during the milking operation.

12-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A milk hose for connecting a teat cup to a multiway valve in an automatic milking plant,

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| said hose defining a longitudinal axis and comprising a first end portion configured for connection to a connecting neck of the teat cup, a second end portion configured for connection to a connecting neck of the multiway valve, and a centre piece disposed between and interconnecting said first and second end portions and having an interior diameter which is substantially constant, said centre piece including a plurality of axially spaced reinforcement elements which extend circumferentially along an exterior of said centre piece, the respective reinforcement elements in a middle of said centre piece having smaller axial dimensions than said reinforcement elements located at said first and second end portions to provide said centre piece with being configured to have a greater flexibility than said first and second end portions, said flexibility increasing towards a-said middle of the-said centre piece.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the reinforcement elements are defined by spaced-apart elevations which enclose the circumference of the centre piece.

20. (Currently Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 19, wherein a wall thickness of each of said elevations exceeds a wall thickness in an area located between two adjacent elevations, the wall thicknesses being defined transversely relative to a-the longitudinal dimension-axis of the milk hose.

21. (Currently Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the first and second end portions each define thereon a reinforcement member, the reinforcement

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members being disposed on respective opposite sides of the centre piece and having wall thicknesses which exceed wall thicknesses of the respective first and second end portions, the wall thicknesses being defined transversely relative to a the longitudinal dimension-axis of the milk hose.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the centre piece comprises a permanently chemically passive and stable material which will not give off secretions to the milk during the milking operation.

24-28. (Cancelled)

29. (Previously Presented) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the milk hose is made of plastic.

30. (Currently Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the milk hose is adapted to be stretched and compressed in the longitudinal direction.

31. (Previously Presented) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein the milk hose is made of plastic.

32. (Currently Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein the milk hose is adapted to be stretched and compressed in the longitudinal direction.

33. (Cancelled)

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34. (Previously Presented) A flexible milk hose according to claim 9 wherein the reinforcement elements are distributed along substantially the entire longitudinal extent of the centre piece as defined between the respective reinforcement members.

35. (Previously Presented) A flexible milk hose according to claim 21 wherein the reinforcement elements are distributed along substantially the entire longitudinal extent of the centre piece as defined between the respective reinforcement members.